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ABSTRACT

Background information and a discussion of major issues accompany recommended state minimum standards for grading as presented by an ad hoc Grading Policy Study Group to the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges. The report first notes the diversity of grading policies among the colleges and then outlines the Group's recommendations: (1) that standardized grading symbols be implemented in a uniform statewide grading scale; (2) that the same grading symbols, definitions, and grade points be used by all community college instructors; (3) that there be a standardized meaning for the "W" (withdrawal) symbol; and (4) that probation based on excessive "NC," "I," and "W" grades be evidence of lack of academic progress. Issues considered in the development of the recommendations are then identified, including the effect of state grading standards on local school autonomy, and a discussion is presented of the use of the "W" symbol and the four withdrawal policies that were considered by the group: i.e., authorized withdrawal through the twelfth week, through the last day of classes, through the second census week, and at the discretion of the local college district. The report provides six appendices containing a summary of the group's recommendations, a minority report regarding the suggested withdrawal policy, and a roster of the study group members. (JP)

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Community College Grading Policies

Allan Petersen, Administrator
Program Evaluation and Approval
Office of the Chancellor for Community Colleges

Agenda Item 5

Report prepared for the Meeting of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges held February 28, 1980 in Upland, California and February 29, 1980 in Alta Loma, California.

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JC 800 147

Board of Governors of the
California Community Colleges
February 28-29, 1980

Item 5

Title: Community College Grading Policies

Staff presentation: Allan Petersen, Administrator
Program Evaluation and Approval

Summary

1. The Through the Open Door study by the California Postsecondary Education Commission and follow-up study of grading practices by Chancellor's Office staff indicated a distinct lack of standardization in grading practices among California Community Colleges.

2. In January 1979, the Chancellor appointed the Grading Policy Study Group to examine existing regulations and recommend appropriate changes.

3. The recommendations of the Study Group have been reviewed by the public in several hearings, by the Education Policy Committee of the Board, and by staff. On February 8, the Education Policy Committee voted to recommend approval of the regulations contained in Appendix B, which commences on page 8.

Recommended action

1. The President of the Board should declare a public hearing on the regulations contained in Appendix B, commencing on page 8.

2. It is recommended that the Board adopt the regulations on grading practice as presented in Appendix B.

Background

1. The Through the Open Door study, completed by the California Post-secondary Education Commission in 1976, and a follow-up study of community college grading policies by the Chancellor's Office in 1978, indicated a wide diversity of grading practices and policies among community colleges and a lack of awareness of state minimum standards.

2. Because of this diversity, its impact upon students, and the need for compliance with state minimum standards, the Board of Governors a year ago asked the Chancellor to take some appropriate action. The Chancellor in January of 1979 appointed five faculty members, four administrators, and one student to a special Grading Policies Study Group (see Appendix A). The Study Group was charged with examining existing regulations on selected grading policies and making recommendations to insure a reasonable degree of commonality among such policies.

3. The Study Group's recommendations are detailed in Appendix C, page 17, of this agenda item along with the proposed Title 5 regulations. Briefly stated, some of the most important of the Study Group's recommendations are:

   -- that the uniform statewide grading scale shall include standardized definitions for both evaluative and nonevaluative symbols

   -- that the same grading symbols, definitions, and grade points be available for use by all community college instructors

   -- that there be a standardized use and meaning of the "W" symbol

   -- that probation based on excessive accumulation of symbols of "NC", "I", and "W" be evidence of lack of academic progress.

4. As is always the case when dealing with sensitive issues, compromises have been reached, and some issues raised in the two studies that preceded these recommendations have been left unattended. Furthermore, the central issue of local autonomy versus state control and the related issue of the extent and purpose of state minimum standards make it difficult to achieve consensus among the various interest groups.

5. The specific set of standards that are proposed in this item are to some an inappropriate intrusion into local control--but to others seem barely sufficient to head off a practice construed to be a relaxation of standards and a denial to students of equality of opportunity. Others are of the opinion that had the Chancellor's Office monitored the use of existing grading regulations, offered necessary interpretations and advocated compliance, the current situation would not have arisen.

6. This matter was presented to the Board of Governors in October, 1979, as an informational item with no staff recommendations included. This action item follows extensive Study Group deliberations since October, 1979, further discussions with the Board of Governors Education Policy Committee, three public hearings, and wide distribution of preliminary drafts of the recommendations.

7. Although there remains some disagreement with one or more of the recommendations by various interest groups, most attention and controversy had focused on the use and meaning of the "W" symbol. The Study Group itself could not agree, and a minority report (Appendix E) reflecting internal disagreement about the "W" is appended to this item.

8. The proposed regulations beginning on page 8 reflect the further recent scrutiny of the Program Evaluation and Approval Unit staff, legal counsel, and Education Policy Committee. Changes were made in the interest of clarity, proper legal form and organization. No substantive changes in content were made except that a proposed phase-in period has been incorporated to allow for efficient transition from existing grading policies regulations (see proposed new Section 51325 on page 16).

9. The Study Group and Chancellor's Office recommendations were presented to the Education Policy Committee February 8 in Los Angeles in a form that focused attention on the use and meaning of the "W" symbol. After considerable discussion, the Education Policy Committee took two separate actions: The first (5-0 vote), to support the grading policies recommendations as presented except for the use and meaning of the "W" symbol but including staff corrections and errata; the second (3-2 vote), to support the final Study Group recommendations concerning the "W" symbol that allow for its use up through the final day of class.

DISCUSSION OF THE USE OF THE "W" SYMBOL

Existing regulations governing the community colleges provide no means to indicate the fact that a student has withdrawn from a class prior to the end of the term. Nearly every California Community College and most four-year colleges and universities use a "W" notation on the student's transcript when a withdrawal occurs. In the absence of regulations, a wide variation in practice has evolved.

In the course of its deliberations, the Grading Policies Study Group recognized that the existence of dissimilar withdrawal policies was a major contributing factor to the perceived inequity in grading practice and could result in inequitable and discriminatory treatment of community college students upon transfer. The Study Group sought to define a symbol which would serve as an end-of-term notation, indicating failure to complete the essential learning tasks of a course, but which would not

lower a student's grade point average. Defining such a symbol proved to be impossible without compromising the evaluative grading system. As the Study Group addressed the problem it became apparent that the "W" was a necessary and appropriate symbol. The Study Group identified the "W" as an "administrative" symbol, i.e., to be used not as a grade, but as an indicator that the student had withdrawn from class after a specified period of time.

Educational Effects and the Proposed Withdrawal Policies that Evolved

The Study Group debated the educational effects of various applications of the "W" symbol. A carefully limited application of the "W" symbol was thought to encourage student commitment to accomplish the objectives of the course. To this end the Study Group discussed permitting the unrestrained use of the "W" symbol in the first half of the term and strictly limiting the use of the "W" in the second half of the term to students withdrawing for serious and compelling reasons clearly beyond their control. The Study Group considered the anticipated outcomes of such a policy. Some of the Study Group believed that a too early date limiting unpenalized withdrawal would inhibit enrollment and attendance of "nontraditional" students who, by policy pronouncements, were otherwise sought.

Alternative withdrawal policies and related justification are discussed below.

1. Authorized Withdrawal Through the Twelfth Week.

   As a result of these deliberations, the Study Group recommended a policy permitting withdrawal from a course with a "W" symbol (and no penalty) through the twelfth week (66%) of the term. Students with valid reasons could still request a "W" through the end of the term by means of administrative petition. This policy was based on the assumption that students should make a commitment to completing the course of study. Such a policy would avoid having the "W" conflict with evaluative grades given at the end of the course.

   This proposal would have had no negative effect on funding based on two census periods, but it would require colleges to consider attendance reporting requirements separately.

2. Authorized Withdrawal Through the Last Day of Classes.

   The policy recommended above engendered a considerable reaction during public hearings. Speakers contended that the beneficial effect of a specific "cut-off time" for the "W" as an incentive to student commitment was an assumption that had never been experimentally validated and could not be demonstrated. Study Group members all recognized the need to provide for the privilege of withdrawal at some point in the term to preserve the essential guidance function of community colleges.

   While the importance of encouraging student commitment was recognized, the Study Group could not agree on the educational effectiveness of any specific "cut-off date." The majority finally agreed to recommend the extension of the non-punitive "W" time period up to and including the last day of instruction prior to scheduled final examinations.

3. Authorized Withdrawal Through the Second Census Week.

The fact that learning theory and practical experience support the importance and validity of student commitment to course objectives is indisputable. Furthermore, practical experience supports the view that early student commitment enhances student accomplishment of course objectives. Therefore, a systemwide "cut-off date" after which withdrawal from a course is permitted only upon the demonstrated existence of serious and compelling circumstances is in the best interest of the students, the staff and supporting public. In addition, a well defined "cut-off date" relatively early in the term would avoid the use of the "W" administrative symbol in lieu of the "D" or "F" evaluative grade.

Since the current financial support system relies on the census of students attending during the 4th and 11th weeks of the term, it is convenient and equally appropriate to use the same time limits to control withdrawal from class. Aligning the "cut-off date" for withdrawal with the census week date would help to minimize administrative data processing problems at the colleges.

4. Authorized Withdrawal Allowing Maximum Local Flexibility.

A withdrawal policy should allow students to participate in and benefit from class activities to the maximum extent consistent with the judgement of local authorities.

Since the needs of the colleges' clientele vary so greatly, the maximum flexibility and local control of withdrawal practice and procedures must be maintained. Therefore, the granting of withdrawal should be based on predetermined criteria established and published by the local board. Responsibility for initiating the official request for withdrawal should rest with the student. Focusing that responsibility on the student should avoid placing instructors in the compromised position described in Appendix E.

Excessive use of the withdrawal privilege may be construed as lack of commitment to the educational endeavor and should be a factor in determining probationary status of the student.

After discussion of these alternatives, the Educational Policy Committee of the Board agreed that it is important that all community colleges provide for student withdrawal with an appropriate standardized symbol. The Committee recommended alternative 2, which is incorporated into the text of the Title 5 language on page 12.

One issue not directly addressed by the Committee was whether alternative 2 should be adopted in the form of an absolute standard or a minimum standard. If it is to be an absolute standard, all districts must adopt regulations which would establish the last day of classes as the last day to withdraw. If it is a minimum standard, a district could adopt a more stringent standard; that is, for example, a district could establish the end of the twelfth week as the last day to withdraw. No district, however, could establish a policy which would permit withdrawal beyond the last day of classes.

For Title 5 language which would address the alternatives discussed above, including alternative 2 as a minimum or absolute standard, see Appendix F on pages 39-44.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Grading Policies Study Group
Appendix B	Revisions to Regulations on Grading Practices
Appendix C	Grading Policies Study Group Recommendation, December 11, 1979
Appendix D	Grading Policies Study Group, Revised Recommendations on Compliance
Appendix E	Grading Policies Study Group, Minority Report Regarding the Withdrawal ("W") Policy
Appendix F	Alternative Withdrawal Policies

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

REVISIONS TO REGULATIONS ON
GRADING PRACTICE

Be it resolved by the Board of Governors, California Community Colleges, acting under the authority of Sections 71020, 71025, 71027, 71066 of the Education Code, and implementing, interpreting and making specific Sections 71066, 72285, 76000, 76224, 78205, and 78207 of the Education Code, and pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, regulations in Title 5, Part VI of the California Administrative Code are amended, repealed and added as follow:

1. Section 51301 is amended to read:

51301. Grading Practices. Each governing board maintaining one or more community colleges shall determine a uniform grading practice for the district which shall be based on sound academic principles and conform to the following standards:

(a) Work in all courses acceptable in fulfillment of the requirements for an associate or baccalaureate degree, a certificate, diploma or license shall be graded in accordance with a grading scale adopted by the governing board consistent with Section 51306, or

(b) Be graded in accordance with the provisions of Section 51302 or Section 51302.5. ~~on-a-credit--no-credit-basis.~~

~~The-governing-board-may-establish-a-deadline-and-make-provisions for-a-student-to-withdraw-from-a-class-without-penalty.~~

2. Section 51302 is amended to read:

51302. ~~Grade~~ Credit-No credit Options. (a) The governing board of a district maintaining a community college may by resolution and regulation offer courses in either or both of the following categories and shall specify in its catalog the category into which each course falls:

(1) Courses wherein all students are evaluated on a "credit-no credit" basis.

(2) Courses wherein each student may elect on registration, ~~or within-such-time-thereafter-as-the-district-governing-board-may determine-by-rules-and-regulations~~, or no later than the end of the first 30% of the term whether the basis of ~~the-student's~~ evaluation is to be "credit-no credit" ~~or-a-grading-scale~~ or a letter grade.

(b) All units earned on a "credit-no credit" basis in accredited California institutions of higher education or equivalent out-of-state institutions shall be counted in satisfaction of community college curriculum requirements. ~~Such-units-shall-be-disregarded in-determining-a-student's-grade-point-average-for-all-purposes for-which-a-grade-point-average-is-required.~~

(c) The governing board may authorize a student who has received credit for a course taken on a "credit-no credit" basis within the district to convert this to a grade based on a grading scale by taking an appropriate examination. Such authorization shall conform to the standards for repeating enrollment contained in subdivision (f) of Section 55002, and Sections 51315, and 51316.

~~(d) In the absence of a regulation of the type authorized in subdivision (a) of this section, the work in a course will be presumed to be evaluated on the basis of a grading scale.~~

~~(e) The governing board shall establish a policy describing the standards for the award of a "credit" grade for a course.~~

(d) Units earned on a "credit-no credit" basis shall not be used to calculate grade point averages. However, units attempted for which "NC" (as defined in Section 51306) is recorded shall be considered in probation and dismissal procedures.

(e) Independent study courses offered in accordance with Sections 55300-55360 of this part may be graded on a "credit/no credit" basis in accordance with subdivision (a) of this section.

3. Section 51302.5 is amended to read:

51302.5. Credit by Examination. (a) The governing board maintaining one or more community colleges shall adopt and publish procedures and regulations pertaining to credit by examination in accordance with the provisions of this section and the provisions of Sections 51301, 51302, 51306, 51308, 51315, 51316, 51318 and subdivision (f) of Section 55002.

(b) The governing board ~~of a district maintaining a community college~~ may grant credit to any student who satisfactorily passes an examination approved or conducted by proper authorities of the college. Such credit may be granted only to a student who is registered at the college and in good standing and only for a course listed in the catalog of ~~a public~~ the community college.

(c) The student's academic record shall be clearly annotated to reflect that credit was earned by examination.

(d) Units for which credit is given pursuant to the provisions of this section shall not be counted in determining the 12 semester hours of credit in residence required by Section 51623.

4. Section 51303 is amended to read:

51303. Standards for Probation. (a) Academic probation. A student who has attempted at least 12 semester or 16 quarter units as shown by the official academic record shall be placed on academic probation if the student has earned a grade point average below 2.0 in all units which were graded on the basis of the grading scale described in Section 51306. ~~The district board shall adopt "credit-no credit" probation rules.~~

(b) Progress probation. A student who has enrolled in a total of at least 12 semester or 16 quarter units as shown by the official academic record shall be placed on progress probation when the percentage of all units in which a student has enrolled and for which entries of "W", "I", and "NC" (as defined in Section 51306) are recorded reaches or exceeds fifty percent (50%).

~~(c) The district board shall adopt rules setting forth the circumstances that shall warrant exceptions to the standards for probation herein set forth and shall file a copy of such rules with the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges.~~

5. Section 51303.5 is added to read:

51303.5. Removal from Probation. (a) A student on academic probation for a grade point deficiency shall be removed from probation when the student's accumulated grade point average is 2.0 or higher.

(b) A student on progress probation because of an excess of units for which entries of "W", "I", and "NC" (as defined in Section 51306) are recorded shall be removed from probation when the percentage of units in this category drops below fifty percent (50%).

(c) The governing board of a district shall adopt and publish procedures and conditions for dismissal and appeal of dismissal and request for reinstatement.

6. Section 51304 is amended to read:

51304. Standards for Dismissal. For purposes of this section, semesters or quarters shall be considered consecutive on the basis of the student's enrollment (i.e., a fall quarter followed by a spring quarter shall be considered consecutive if the student was not enrolled in the winter quarter of that academic year).

(a) A student who is on academic probation shall be ~~dismissed~~ subject to dismissal if the student earned a cumulative grade point average of less than 1.75 in all units attempted in each of 3 consecutive semesters (5 consecutive quarters) which were graded on the basis of the grading scale described in Section 51306. ~~The district board shall adopt "credit---no credit" dismissal rules.~~

(b) A student who has been placed on progress probation shall be subject to dismissal if the percentage of units in which the student has been enrolled for which entries of "W", "I", and "NC" (as defined in Section 51306) are recorded in at least 3 consecutive semesters (5 consecutive quarters) reaches or exceeds fifty percent (50%) in accordance with Section 51303.

(c) The governing board of a district shall adopt and publish procedures and conditions for dismissal and appeal of dismissal and request for reinstatement.

The district board shall adopt rules setting forth the circumstances that shall warrant exceptions to the standards for dismissal herein set forth and shall file a copy of such rules with the Chancellor ~~of the California Community Colleges~~.

7. Section 51306 is amended to read:

51306. Academic Record Symbols and Grade Point Average. (a) Grades from a grading scale shall be averaged on the basis of the point equivalencies to determine a student's grade point average. The highest grade shall receive four points, and the lowest grade shall receive 0 points, using only the following evaluative symbols:

Symbol	Definition	Grade Points
A	Excellent	4
B	Good	3
C	Satisfactory	2
D	Passing, less than satisfactory	1
F	Failing	0
CR	Credit (at least satisfactory-units awarded not counted in GPA)	
NC	No Credit (less than satisfactory, or failing-units not counted in GPA)	

(b) The governing board for each community college district shall ~~establish~~ publish the point equivalencies for the grades used in ~~from the grading scale at that Community College in accordance with~~ subsection (a) of this section ~~These equivalencies shall be published~~ in the catalog or catalogues of that community college district as a part of its ~~the~~ grading practices. ~~for that Community College.~~

(c) The governing board of each community college district may authorize the use of only the following non-evaluative symbols:

Symbol	Definition
I	Incomplete: Incomplete academic work for unforeseeable, emergency and justifiable reasons at the end of the term may result in an "I" symbol being entered in the student's record. The condition for removal of the "I" shall be stated by the instructor in a written record. This record shall contain the conditions for removal of the "I" and the grade assigned in lieu of its removal. This record must be given to the student with a copy on file with the registrar until the "I" is made up or the time limit has passed. A final grade shall be assigned when the work stipulated has been completed and evaluated, or when the time limit for completing the work has passed. The "I" may be made up no later than one year following the end of the term in which it was assigned. The "I" symbol shall not be used in calculating units attempted nor for grade points. The governing board shall provide a process whereby a student may petition for a time extension due to unusual circumstances.
IP	In Progress The "IP" symbol shall be used to denote that the class extends beyond the normal end of an academic term. It indicates that work is "in progress," but that assignment of a substantive grade must await its completion. The "IP" symbol shall remain on the student's permanent record in order to satisfy enrollment documentation. The appropriate evaluative grade and unit credit shall be assigned and appear on the student's record for the term in which the course is completed. The "IP" shall not be used in calculating grade point averages.

RD — Report Delayed

The "RD" symbol may be assigned by the registrar only. It is to be used when there is a delay in reporting the grade of a student due to circumstances beyond the control of the student. It is a temporary notation to be replaced by a permanent symbol as soon as possible. "RD" shall not be used in calculating grade point averages.

W — Withdrawal

Withdrawal from a class or classes shall be authorized through the last day of formal instruction prior to the first day of the final examination schedule. The academic record of a student who remains in a class beyond that time must reflect a symbol as authorized in Section 51306 of this Title, other than a "W".

No notation (W or other) shall be made on the academic record of the student who withdraws during the first 4 weeks or 30% of a term, whichever is less.

Withdrawal between the fourth week and the final day of instruction shall be recorded as a "W" on the student's record.

The "W" shall not be used in calculating grade point averages, but excessive "W's" (as defined in Section 51303 and 51304 of this part) shall be used as factors in probation and dismissal procedures.

Within these guidelines, criteria for withdrawal and the procedures to accomplish it shall be established by local boards and published in college catalogs.

8. Section 51307 is amended to read:

51307. Notification of Probation and Dismissal. Each community college shall make every reasonable effort to notify a student of academic probation or dismissal ~~no later than the fifth day of classes of the~~ at or near the beginning of the semester or quarter in which it will ~~be in~~ take effect but, in any case, no later than the start of the fall semester or quarter. Each community college shall also make every reasonable effort to provide counseling and other support services to a student on probation to help the student overcome any academic difficulties. Each community college shall make every reasonable effort to notify a student of removal from probation or reinstatement after dismissal within timelines established by the district. Probation and dismissal policies and procedures shall be published in the college catalog.

9. Section 51308 is repealed:

~~51308.--Grades-Offered.--(a)-the-governing-board-of-a-district-maintaining-a-Community-College-may-by-regulation-offer-courses-in-either-or both-of-the-following-categories-and-shall-specify-in-its-catalog-the category-or-categories-in-which-the-course-falls:~~

~~(1)--Courses-wherein-all-students-are-evaluated-on-a-"credit-no-credit" basis.~~

~~(2)--Courses-wherein-each-student-may-elect-on-registration,-or-within a-reasonable-time-thereafter,-whether-the-basis-of-his-evaluation-is-to be-a-"credit-no-credit"-or-a-letter-grade.~~

~~(b)--All-units-earned-on-a-"credit-no-credit"-basis-in-California institutions-of-higher-education-or-equivalent-out-of-state-institutions shall-be-counted-in-satisfaction-of-Community-College-curriculum-requirements.--Such-units-shall-be-disregarded-in-determining-a-student's-grade point-average-for-all-purposes-for-which-a-grade-point-average-is-required.~~

~~(c)--The-governing-board-of-a-district-maintaining-a-Community-College may-authorize-a-student-who-has-received-credit-for-a-course-taken-on-a "credit-no-credit"-basis-within-the-district-to-convert-this-grade-to-a letter-grade-by-taking-an-appropriate-examination.~~

~~(d)--In-the-absence-of-a-regulation-of-the-type-authorized-in-subdivision-(a)-of-this-section,-a-course-will-be-presumed-to-be-offered-on-a letter-grade-basis.~~

10. Section 51308 is added to read:

51308. Grade Changes. (a) In any course of instruction in a community college district for which grades are awarded, the instructor of the course shall determine the grade to be awarded each student in accordance with Section 51306 of this chapter. The determination of the student's grade by the instructor shall be final in the absence of mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency. Procedures for the correction of grades given in error shall include expunging the incorrect grade from the record.

(b) The governing board may authorize a student who has received credit for a course taken on a "credit-no credit" basis within the district, to convert this to a grade based on a grading scale by taking an appropriate examination. Such authorization shall conform to the procedures for repeating enrollment contained in subdivision (f) of Section 55002.

(c) The governing board of a district shall adopt and publish procedures and regulations pertaining to the repetition of courses for which substandard work has been recorded in accordance with subdivision (f) of Section 55002, and Sections 51315 and 51316. When grade changes are made in accordance with these Sections, appropriate annotations of any courses repeated shall be entered on the student's permanent academic record in such a manner that all work remains legible, insuring a true and complete academic history.

11. Section 51315 is amended to read:

51315. District Policy for Course Repetition. The governing board of a district maintaining a community college shall adopt and publish procedures or regulations pertaining to the repetition of courses for which substandard work has been recorded. For purposes of course repetition, academic renewal, and all other related provisions in this part, the term "substandard" shall be defined as meaning course work for which the grading symbols "D," "F," and/or "NC" (as defined in Section 51306) have been recorded. The procedures or regulations may allow such courses to be repeated and the previous grade and credit to be disregarded in the computation of grade point averages. In such cases, ~~unusual circumstances which justify the repetition of enrollment will be deemed to exist, and~~ the procedure specified in subdivision (f) of Section 55002 and Sections 51308 and 51316 of this part shall be followed. When course repetition occurs, the permanent academic record shall be annotated in such a manner that all work remains legible, insuring a true and complete academic history.

12. Section 51316 is amended to read:

51316. Course Repetition: Implementation. In adopting procedures or regulations pertaining to the repetition of courses for which substandard academic performance has been previously recorded, the governing board of a district maintaining a community college:

(a) Shall not adopt any regulation or procedure which conflicts with:

(1) Education Code Section 76224, pertaining to the finality of grades assigned by instructors, and

(2) Chapter 2.5 (commencing with Section 59020) of Division 10 of this part, pertaining to the retention and destruction of records and particularly subdivision (d) of Section 59023, relating to the permanency of certain student records;

(b) May permit repetition of any course which was taken in an accredited college or university and for which substandard academic performance as defined in Section 51315 is recorded.

(c) Shall, when adopted procedures or regulations permit course repetition, indicate any specific courses or categories of courses which are exempt from consideration under these regulations;

(d) Shall, in accordance with ~~Title 5, Division 6, Chapter 1, Section 55002 (f)~~ subdivision (f) of Section 55002, deem any course repetition permitted under ~~Title 5, Part VI, Division 2, Chapter 4,~~ Section 51315 to ~~constitute "unusual circumstances" and shall, therefore,~~ require "prior written permission from the district superintendent or the district superintendent's authorized representative or representatives";

(e) Shall clearly indicate any courses repeated under the provisions of this section and Section 51315 on the student's permanent academic record, using an appropriate symbol;

(f) Shall, when adopted procedures or regulations permit course repetition, publish specific procedures to implement this section;

(g) May, in determining transfer of a student's credits, honor similar, prior course repetition actions by other accredited colleges and universities; and

(h) Shall maintain a careful record of actions taken under course repetition procedures or regulations adopted in compliance with this section and Section 51315, since periodic reports may be required by the Chancellor.

13. Section 51318 is amended to read:

51318. District Policy for Academic Renewal Without Course Repetition. The governing board of a district maintaining a community college shall adopt and publish procedures or regulations pertaining to the alleviation of previously recorded, substandard academic performance, as defined in Section 51315, which is not reflective of a student's demonstrated ability. Such procedures or regulations shall include a clear statement of the educational principles upon which they are based, and shall be referred to as academic renewal regulations. When academic renewal procedures or regulations adopted by the districts permit previously recorded, substandard course work to be disregarded in the computation of grade point averages, the permanent academic record shall be annotated in such a manner that all work remains legible, insuring a true and complete academic history.

14. Section 51319 is amended to read:

51319. Academic Renewal Without Course Repetition: Implementation. In adopting procedures or regulations pertaining to the alleviation of previously recorded, substandard academic performance, as defined in Section 51315 which is not reflective of a student's demonstrated ability, the governing board of a district maintaining a community college:

(a) Shall not adopt any regulation or procedure which conflicts with:

(1) Education Code Section 76224, pertaining to the finality of grades assigned by ~~instruction~~ instructors, and

(2) Chapter 2.5 (commencing with Section 59020) of Division 10 of ~~Title 5~~ this part pertaining to the retention and destruction of records, and particularly subdivision (d) of Section ~~59023(d)~~ 59023, relating to the permanency of certain student records.

(b) Shall, when the adopted procedures or regulations permit such alleviation, state:

(1) The maximum amount of coursework that may be alleviated;

(2) The amount of academic work to have been completed at a satisfactory level (minimum 2.00) subsequent to the coursework to be alleviated;

(3) The length of time to have elapsed since the coursework to be alleviated was recorded; and

(4) A description of any specific courses and/or categories of courses that are, for any reason, exempt from consideration under the alleviation regulations.

(c) Shall, when the adopted procedures or regulations permit such alleviation, publish specific procedures to be followed in implementing procedures or regulations adopted pursuant to this section and Section 51318, stating, at a minimum:

(1) The procedures to be followed by students in petitioning for alleviation; and

(2) The officers and/or personnel responsible for implementing the procedures or regulations.

15. Section 51325 is added, to read:

51325. In adopting regulations and otherwise implementing the provisions of this chapter, the governing board of a district may request a reasonable phase-in period from the Chancellor. All such requests shall be made on, and in accordance with, a form provided by the Chancellor. No request shall be granted which would provide for a phase-in period which extends beyond July 1, 1981.

16. Section 55002 is amended to read:

55002. Standards. A graded course shall meet all of the following standards:

(a) The content is organized to meet the requirements for the associate degree as specified in Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 51600) of Division 2 of this part or the requirements for an occupational certificate and is a part of a course of study not exceeding 70 units in length.

(b) It is offered as described in the college catalog, or a supplement thereto, which provides an appropriate title, number, and accurate description of course content. A course outline is available at the college. Course requirements and credit awarded are consistent with Education Code Section 66701.

(c) Only those students who have met the prerequisites for the course are enrolled.

(d) It is subject to the published standards of matriculation, attendance, and achievement of the college.

(e) The ~~enrollees~~ students are awarded marks or grades on the basis of methods of evaluation set forth in Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 51300) of Division 2 of this part or to such additional standards as may be established by the governing board of the district.

(f) Enrollment cannot be repeated except: to alleviate substandard work which has been recorded on the student's record; or as permitted in Section 51315 of this part; or in unusual circumstances and with the prior written permission from the district superintendent or authorized representative or representatives.

Be it further resolved that these revisions to Title 5 regulations mandate no new or additional costs to local, state, or federal agencies, within the meaning of Revenue and Taxation Code, Section 2231.

APPENDIX C

CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE
CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
GRADING POLICIES STUDY GROUP
RECOMMENDATIONS
December 11, 1979

I. INTRODUCTION

Both the California Postsecondary Education Commission's (CPEC) study, Through the Open Door (1976), and a subsequent study conducted by Chancellor Craig's staff indicate that equality of opportunity to students served by the state's community colleges is being denied through wide variations in student accounting procedures and grading policies among the colleges. Moreover, the studies indicate that at least some of these inequities result from confusion about and failure to comply with existing Title 5 regulations and the State Education Code. Additionally, findings resulting from polls (1977) of the community college faculty conducted by the Statewide Academic Senate indicate that many of the present grading policies adversely affect academic standards.

Because of the Board of Governors' keen interest in an equitable resolution to these and other problems associated with grading policies, the Chancellor in January, 1979, appointed five faculty members, four administrators, and one student to a grading policies study group.

The Grading Policies Study Group was charged with examining existing state regulations and policy statements and practices pertaining to grading policies on the various college campuses and making recommendations to obtain solutions to problems associated with them where such solutions may be obtainable through state regulation.

After examination of considerable data including the above mentioned documents as well as the CCJCA response to Through the Open Door, the resolutions adopted by the Spring, 1979, Convention of the Academic Senate, the Academic Standards Report of the Los Angeles Community College District, statistical data developed by the Chancellor's staff, and an extensive list of other documents, the Study Group determined that in order to develop a workable framework for discussion, research, and recommendation, it would be necessary to focus its attention on a limited list of subjects which seemed most pertinent to the major areas of concern and which seemed most amenable to positive reform through modification of Title 5 regulations.

The following subject areas were finally determined to be within that manageable framework and were assigned to teams of two committee members each for additional research and the development of position papers for review by the entire committee:

A. Grading symbols and definitions
B. Credit/No Credit issues
C. Grade Changes
D. Course repetition
E. Final Examinations
F. Credit by Examination
G. Probation
H. Dismissal
I. Notification of Probation and Dismissal
J. Auditing
K. Compliance (This subject area was expanded and dealt with in earlier drafts, but was finally deleted from the body of this report. The study group decided that the compliance issue was one that touched upon all of the Board of Governor's minimum standards and, therefore, needed broader more complete attention. See additional comments in Appendix B.

In developing this list, the committee also determined that some issues such as limitations on categories of credit applicable for degrees, or the question of academic renewal, and others which are unquestionably a part of grading policy considerations, nevertheless impinge so greatly on other broad areas of academic concern that they should be addressed by another group--perhaps the Chancellor's Task Force on General Education and Graduation Requirements.

Very early in its work, the committee also agreed upon the following format for the presentation of its recommendations:

A. Statement of present Title 5 regulations
B. Statement of recommendation (change or status quo)
C. Statement of rationale

Other procedural matters addressed by the committee included the election of a faculty member as chair, establishing provisions for written agenda and the recording of minutes of the meetings. Secretarial and technical support were supplied by the Chancellor's staff.

During the Spring, 1979, the study group met in 8 all-day meetings during which it drafted a series of tentative recommendations based on the additional research and writing of its two person "teams." These initial recommendations were presented to the Educational Policy Committee of the Board of Governors at its public meeting, June 1, 1979, for reactions and suggestions. Subsequently, on June 4, 1979, a modified version of these early recommendations was mailed by the Chancellor's staff to all Superintendent/Presidents, Faculty Senate Presidents, and other educational groups interested in community college education to attend an open meeting of the Study Group held June 20, 1979 to respond to a more complete set of study group recommendations which the group had developed in two full-day June meetings. Approximately 50 persons responded to the invitation and engaged in a lively exchange of ideas and recommendations among themselves and with the members of the study group.

In addition to this oral response, numerous written responses and telephone calls, representing the views of individual faculty members, administrators, groups, and campuses have been received by the study group. From these reactions together with technical advice from the Chancellor's staff given to committee members during an all-day meeting July 13, 1979, the group decided upon significant revisions to its formative recommendations. These were incorporated in a revised version of the proposal and submitted to the Chancellor's staff for detailed technical and legal review. These materials were then reviewed by a subcommittee of the study group and the Chancellor's Office staff September 13 and 20, 1979 for clarity and organization.

The recommendations were presented again to the Board of Governors Education Policy Committee and the colleges October 5 in the format of a second public hearing. A massive mail out of the report preceded that meeting. The study group met again the afternoon of October 5 and, among other actions, eliminated from the body of the report the recommendations dealing with compliance issues.

The Board of Governors Education Policy Committee met again to consider the grading policies recommendations November 16. A public hearing held as an adjunct to that meeting provided the study group, Chancellor's staff, and the Board with additional viewpoints. The study group then met November 20, and December 11 to consider the additional viewpoints and to further revise its recommendations.

In summary, and to illustrate the extent of involvement, following the June 20 hearing, the study group began a reexamination of its preliminary recommendations. Staff made available the many written comments of the various constituency groups, and all were considered. Four additional meetings of the study group were held. In addition, separate and sometimes multiple discussions were held by Chancellor's Office staff and/or study group members with the statewide academic senate, deans of instruction, registrars, deans of admission, Chancellor's advisory committee, Chancellor's student service advisory committee, as well as with other groups that involved students, faculty, administrations, and trustees. A second public hearing was held in Southern California and a third in Northern California, followed by final study group discussions.

All of the above were supplemented with extensive mail outs. Early in the deliberations, the existing Title 5 and Education Code provisions on grading policies along with a specific subject area matrix and identifier were mailed to local faculty senate presidents and others to be sure that the issues were well known and understood. Faculty senates have debated the issues and made recommendations through the statewide academic senate with recommendations from that body coming to the study group.

In the development of its recommendations the committee found it necessary to address many issues and positions in the process of its study of grading policies; the following, however, are major concerns which underlie and form the basis for its specific recommendations:

1. The question of local autonomy. The study group recognizes that the proposed changes in grading policy and that there are members of the college community who have serious reservations about any proposed state standardization. The study group believes that where a choice must be made between local autonomy and equity for students, the principle of equality of opportunity for students must prevail.

2. The question of state minimum standards. The study group discussed at length whether or not it was appropriate to recommend the establishment of specific standards in many areas of grading policy rather than to retail and/or modify the concept of state minimum standards now employed in Title 5. It finally concluded that in certail areas of grading policies continuation of the cencept of minimum standards would fail to remedy the problems associated with the variable local standards permitted under present policy.

3. The question of "penalty" and "non-penalty" grading systems. In recommending the continuation of the traditional grading system including the grade symbols "D," and "F," as well as placing limitations on the use of the "W," "I," and "NC," the committee is aware that there are those within the community college establishment who interpret such symbols and strictures as "penalties" and their absence as "non-penalty." In reaching its decisions regarding the specific symbols, definitions, and uses thereof, the study group has borne this fact in mind, as well as the considerations which follow, and the study group believes that the use of the terms "penalty" and "non-penalty" is inappropriate.

   First of all, the purpose for which grading symbols and grading scales have been established is to provide as accurate a shorthand account of the faculty's assessment of a student' educational progress and/or performance as possible. It seems clear that, where failure as well as outstanding success is possible, provision must be made to record both. Secondly, the committee is mindful of the number of relief measures available to students who are experiencing difficulty in achieving their educational goals. These include provisions for grade forgiveness and academic renewal, programs of all types for remediation of basic skills, counseling assistance, and grievance procedures to adjudicate grading practices where faculty are perceived to be unfair, incompetent, etc. With

these provisions and the professional use of a well-defined, understandable range of evaluative symbols, far from penalizing students with low grades and/or jeopardizing their educational progress, colleges should be better able to identify those who need help and provide them with needed assistance to achieve their educational objectives.

It should also be observed that under a given set of circumstances with an individual student's specific objectives, any letter grade which assigns less than the maximum number of the grade points possible, could be interpreted as a penalty if the grading process is perceived in that manner. It is the responsibility of all staff members of a college to promote the view that standardized grading constitutes a fair, equitable and beneficial evaluation of student performance and not a penalty upon students.

4. The question of flexibility. Although the study group is recommending the retention of the traditional grading scale, additional flexibility is needed to report accurately the progress of students.

For this reason, the committee is recommending the retention of the "CR/NC" symbols with some modifications as explained in the body of the document, and the introduction and use of the "IP" symbol to denote classes crossing the normal end of an academic term.

Finally, it should be said that while all members of the study group contributed to the development of these recommendations, and all worked to develop a clear, understandable set of regulations which would resolve many of the problems associated with the present policies and ultimately provide a more equitable opportunity for the state's communities to achieve their educational goals, no committee member subscribes to these recommendations in their entirety as fully expressing each person's view. Indeed, with respect to the specific recommendation regarding the "W" symbol, a minority report is appended to this item.

II. STUDY GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. ACADEMIC RECORD SYMBOLS AND DEFINITIONS

1. Evaluative Symbols:

Recommendation:

The study group recommends that a uniform statewide grading scale be established; that the symbols be available for use by all community college instructors within the guidelines

established by Title 5 regulations and the state Education Code; and that Title 5 regulations include the following grading symbols, corresponding definitions and grade points:

Symbol	Definition	Grade Points
A	Excellent	4
B	Good	3
C	Satisfactory	2
D	Passing, less than satisfactory	1
F	Failing	0
CR	Credit (at least satisfactory - units awarded not counted in GPA)	
NC	No Credit (less than satisfactory or failing - units not counted in GPA)	

Rationale:

The rationale for this recommendation is discussed at some length in the introductory remarks and is based primarily upon the need to rectify the current situation in which wide variations in grading symbols, their use, and definitions have resulted in inequitable treatment of students. This is a problem explored in Through the Open Door, the Chancellor's Staff's response to it, and the CCJCA response. The most obvious example is revealed in the statistical data supplied by both the Chancellor's staff and the Academic Senate's poll of the faculty which indicate that 22% of the community colleges presently do not permit use of a letter grade equivalent to 0 grade points. This discriminates against students in the majority of the colleges, where such a grade is used. The practice distorts the comparative grade point averages for all community college students, denies to the faculty the ability to indicate the lack of success of a given student, and misleads the student, employer and other academicians, as to the student's skill and/or knowledge. This prohibition is in violation of existing Title 5 regulation (Section 51306(a)), and is also, in the opinion of the study group, a violation of the state Education Code, Section 76224, which gives the instructor the right to determine a student's grade.

The recommendation to establish a uniform grading scale, with uniform definitions for use in all community colleges is supported by resolutions adopted at the Spring, 1979, Convention of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges.

The selection of symbols and their definitions and grade points was made by the study group from a compilation of numerous symbols supplied by the Chancellor's staff and which appear to be those most universally understood and used. The specific recommendation that the "CR" symbol be defined as "at least satisfactory," is intended to clarify scattered references to it as "satisfactory" in existing Title 5 regulations and also to provide greater ease in transferring such units to the other public segments of California post-secondary education which now universally define the symbol as the equivalent of a "C" grade or better. The recommendation that the "NC" be defined as "unsatisfactory" logically follows from the definition of "CR" and permits the repetition of such course work under other provisions contained in Title 5.

2. Non-evaluative Symbols:

Recommendation:

The study group recommends that the following non-evaluative symbols together with the definitions, rules and procedures described below be used as required at all California Community Colleges in order to provide greater flexibility and more accurate record keeping than that possible by using only the above evaluative scale.

Symbol	Definition
I	Incomplete

The conditions for assigning an "I" shall be restricted to situations in which the instructor concludes that because of unforeseeable, but fully justifiable reasons a clearly identifiable portion of a course requirement, e.g., a final examination or major paper, cannot be completed within the academic term. The conditions for removal of the "I" shall be stated by the instructor in a written record and given to the student with a copy placed on file with the registrar until the "I" is made up or the time limit for removal has passed. The instructor shall also state in writing the grade the student shall receive if the incomplete work is not made up. This information shall also be stated on the written record. The final grade shall be assigned when the work stipulated has been completed and evaluated, or when the time limit for completing the work has passed.

An "I" may be removed no later than one year following the end of the term in which it was assigned.

The governing board shall provide a process whereby a student may petition for a time extension due to unusual circumstances.

Rationale:

The limitations placed on the use of the "I" are designed to encourage students to complete course requirements unless extreme circumstances prevent them from doing so. They are further intended to indicate that an "I" should be assigned neither to permit students to improve a final grade by the late completion of minor assignments, nor to let students obtain unauthorized end-of-the term withdrawals.

Symbol	Definition
IP	In progress

The "IP" symbol shall be used to denote that the class extends beyond the normal end of an academic term. It indicates that work is in progress but that assignment of a substantive grade must await completion of additional work. The "IP" symbol shall remain on the student's permanent record in order to satisfy enrollment documentation. The appropriate evaluative symbol and unit credit shall be assigned and appear on the student's record for the term in which the course is completed. The "IP" shall not be used in calculating grade point averages.

RD	Report Delayed

The "RD" symbol may be assigned by the registrar only. It is to be used when there is a delay in reporting the grade of a student due to circumstances beyond the control of the student. It is a temporary notation to be replaced by a substantive grading symbol as soon as possible. "RD" shall not be used in calculating grade point averages.

W	Withdrawal (Authorized)

Withdrawal from a class or classes shall be authorized up to and including the last day of formal instruction prior to the first day of the final examination schedule. The academic

record of a student who remains in a class beyond that time must reflect a symbol as authorized in Section 51306 of this Title other than a "W".

No notation shall be made on the academic record of the student who withdraws during the first 4 weeks or 30% of the term, whichever is less. Withdrawal between the fourth week and the last day of instruction shall be recorded as "W" on the student's record.

The "W" shall not be used in calculating grade point averages, but excessive "W's" as defined by Sections 51303 and 51304 of this Title shall be used as factors in probation and dismissal procedures.

Within these guidelines, criteria and procedures for withdrawal shall be established by local boards and published in college catalogs.

Rationale:

College policies relating to the use of the "W" vary greatly and are so extensive that only the most significant are summarized here as follows:

The "W" has been the symbol used to indicate official withdrawal from classes initiated by the student; it has also been used to indicate the exclusion from classes for nonattendance or other reasons; and it has been used by instructors in lieu of issuing unsatisfactory letter grades at the end of the term.

Excessive "W's," as defined by the individual college districts, may be counted as factors in probation and dismissal procedures. Attendance keeping devices generally provide for the use of the "W" only, regardless of the time in the term it is used. This prevents the assignment of any other symbol for late withdrawing and/or non-attending students. Some colleges designate a period at the beginning of each term during which withdrawals need not be recorded in any manner on the student's record. Some colleges discourage "late" withdrawals with catalog statements which threaten "F's" for failure to properly withdraw. Other colleges permit the recording of "W's" through and after the final examination period.

The results of this diversity are widely viewed as detrimental to the educational programs of the community colleges and are so perceived by the study group.

Accounting data related to drop dates, census weeks, etc. are questionable at best due to the diverse use of the "W" as both an indicator of authorized and late withdrawals, and as an end of the semester letter "grade."

These variations in use also indicate considerable inequity in the treatment of students, since the records of students at colleges which permit end-of-term withdrawals or which do not use the "W" for probation or dismissal purposes, do reflect better scholastic performance than those with more restrictive policies.

The widespread use of the "W" as an end-of-term grade is selectively discriminatory in another manner since certain students--notably those receiving financial aid--must receive an evaluative grade indicating completion of a course. "W" does not satisfy this requirement and these students are denied or must repay funds if it is used.

Many faculty feel that the policies listed above also contribute to the lowering of academic standards, and note among many the following detrimental results:

The variety of policies and the permissiveness of some policies regarding drop dates and/or probation and dismissal encourage irresponsible practices on the part of students. The widespread use of the "W" as a terminal "grade" places considerable pressure on faculty members to use that symbol when in reality they wish to evaluate the student's class performance.

For these reasons, the study group has attempted to provide a uniform policy statement concerning the "W" which will separate it as an accounting symbol from the evaluation process; will take into consideration the legitimate needs of the community colleges' varied student population to withdraw when they feel it is desirable; and at the same time will encourage the responsible use of a valuable and costly educational system.

The Study Group failed to agree upon an educational rationale for a withdrawal date before the end of the term. Traditional paradigms suggest that early commitment to course objectives instill motivation and seriousness of purpose in students. However, for many of today's nontraditional students an early withdrawal date might serve only as a deterrent for enrollment, depriving many of educational opportunity. Any recommended withdrawal date should seek to extend student retention and maximize the opportunity for learning.

As the process of teaching ceases only with the last day of instruction, that is the last point in the term where a student could benefit by classroom instruction. Therefore, the Study Group recommends that the "W" symbol be authorized through the last day of formal instruction.

The recommendation that excessive "W's" be included in probation and/or dismissal procedures is intended to encourage and enable the colleges to provide counseling and other services to assist these students in completing their educational programs.

B. CREDIT/NO CREDIT

Recommendation:

The study group recommends that the existing Title 5 Sections 51302 and 51308 (see Appendix B) be combined under one number and heading and be modified as follows:

1. A community college governing board may by resolution and regulation offer courses in the following categories and shall specify in its catalog the category into which each course falls:

   a. Courses wherein all students are evaluated on a credit/no credit basis.

   b. Courses wherein each student may elect upon registration or within the first 30% of the term whether the basis of the student's evaluation is to be a "credit/no credit" or a letter grade.

2. When a district offers courses in which there is a single satisfactory standard of performance for which unit credit is assigned, the "CR/NC" grading system shall be used to the exclusion of other grades. Credit shall be assigned for meeting that standard, no credit for failure to do so.

3. The governing board may authorize a student who has received credit for a course taken on a "CR/NC" basis within the district to change this to a grade based on a grading scale by taking an appropriate examination.

   Such authorization shall conform to the standards for repeating enrollment contained in Section 55002(f).

4. All units earned on a "CR/NC" basis in accredited postsecondary institutions shall be counted in satisfaction of equivalent community college requirements.

5. Credit/no credit units shall not be used to calculate grade point averages. Nevertheless, units attempted for which a "NC" is recorded shall be used as a factor in probation and dismissal procedures.

Rationale:

Sections 51302 and 51308 are currently almost identical; however, the minor differences in wording contained in the two sections are significant and confusing to the reader. Therefore, the study group recommends that they be combined.

The recommendation to change the permissive but differing time periods currently allowed under Sections 51302 and 51308 noted in 1 (a) above to one standardized period is consistent with other recommendations based on the need for greater equity for students. The variation which now exists in local policies ranges from requiring students to make the "Credit/No Credit" decision at registration to permitting them the option to the end of the academic term. This recommendation is also consistent with the time period allowed under the recommended "W" policy for unrecorded withdrawals.

The recommendation in 2 above is designed to provide a consistent, understandable framework for recording unit credit in courses in which single objectives and/or standards are established and unit credit is assigned when these objectives are met. No comparison with other students is included, nor are variations in quality of performance or achievement considered in awarding credit. It is inappropriate, therefore, for symbols--frequently the "A"--from the traditional grading scale to be assigned in these courses.

C. GRADE CHANGES

Recommendation:

The study group recommends:

that the conditions under which grades may be changed continue to be restricted to those provisions allowable under Education Code 76224, i.e., where error, fraud, bad faith, or incompetency is found; or under Title 5 provisions allowing the conversion of "credit" to a letter grade as modified above; or under provisions for course repetition as provided in Section 51315 as modified;

that when erroneous notations as indicated under Education Code 76224 are determined to be present on a student's permanent record, the correction procedure shall include expunging them;

that when a grade is changed under either of the other permissible provisions, the permanent record shall be annotated in such a way that all work remains legible insuring a true and complete academic history;

that Title 5 require district governing boards to develop and publish policies and procedures for grade changes as permitted in EC 76224, Title 5, and Sections 51302 (c) and 51308 (c) as modified.

Rationale:

These recommendations are designed to clarify and bring consistency and equity to the permanent records of students, and to emphasize the limitations on grade changes.

D. COURSE REPETITION

Recommendations:

The study group recommends:

that the term "substandard" currently undefined in the Title 5 sections applicable to course repetition and academic renewal be defined in these and any other sections of Title 5 as meaning course work for which the grading symbols D, F, and/or NC have been recorded;

that the statement "In such cases, unusual circumstances which justify the repetition of enrollment will be deemed to exist, and the procedure specified in Section 55002 (f) of this part shall be followed" be expunged and that the similar reference to Section 55002 (f) contained in Section 51316 (d) likewise be expunged and that a simple statement requiring the prior written permission from the district superintendent or authorized representative be substituted in both places for the language removed;

that section 55002 pertaining to the standards for a graded course be modified to permit course repetition for substandard work as defined and regulated in sections 51315 and 51316;

that course repetition be permitted when the governing board has designated certain courses that may be repeated for credit. Such courses will be so designated in the college catalog. Courses so designated must provide for either 1) a substantive change in subject matter, e.g., independent study, or 2) increasing levels of student performance.

Rationale:

The lack of a definition for "substandard" work has led to situations on some campuses in which any course work for which a grade less than an "A" has been recorded is defined as "substandard." This seems to the group to be a poor definition of substandard and is educationally unsound. The inclusion of the recommended definition should remove all ambiquity as to the meaning and intent of the provisions pertaining to repetition of substandard work.

The recommendations pertaining to modification of 55002 are designed to remove the inherent contradictions between the sections. Furthermore, it removes from the Title 5 regulations the pretense that substandard course work is, or should be deemed to be, "unusual." Clearly, this is contrary to all known educational data.

E. FINAL EXAMS

Recommendation:

The study group recommends that Title 5 remain silent on the question of final examinations.

Rationale

Whether final exams are required or not should be a function of the instructional objectives of any particular course and should be so indicated in course outlines. The consequences of the failure to take a final exam should depend upon the relationship of that exam to the structure of the course.

F. CREDIT BY EXAMINATION

Recommendation:

The study group recommends that Title 5 regulations pertaining to Credit by Examination be modified by adding the following provisions:

1. That governing boards develop and publish regulations providing for Credit by Examination consistent with provisions for Grading Practices, Section 51301 as modified below, and with the provisions for Grade Changes and Course Repetition provided in Title 5.

2. The student's academic record shall be clearly annotated to reflect that credit was earned by examination in order to identify such course credit for the purpose of establishing enrollment documentation and placing such other limitations as are generally associated with such credit.

3. That Section 51301, Grading Practices, (b) be modified to read: Be graded in accordance with the provisions of Section 51302 or Section 51302.5.

Rationale:

Section 51301 presently seems to require that Credit by Examination be graded on a Credit/No credit option only. The study group perceives that this is too restrictive a requirement. The decision as to whether a course challenged by examination should be graded according to the grading scale or on a credit/no credit basis should depend upon the instructional objectives of the particular course and should be left to the judgment of the faculty designing or approving the examination.

Other recommendations are intended to bring consistency and equity to these regulations.

G. PROBATION

Recommendation:

That Title 5, Section 51303 be worded as follows:

51303. Standards for Probation (a) Academic probation. A student who has attempted 12 semester or 16 quarter units shall be placed on academic probation if the student has earned a grade point average below 2.0 in all units attempted which were graded on the basis of the grading scale described in Section 51306.

(b) Progress probation. A student who has enrolled in a total of at least 12 semester or 16 quarter units as shown by the official academic record shall be placed on progress probation when the percentage of units attempted for which entries of "W", "I", and "NC" are recorded reaches or exceeds fifty percent (50%).

(c) Removal from probation. A student on probation for a grade point deficiency shall be removed from probation when the student's accumulated grade point average is 2.0 or higher; a student on probation on the basis of too high a percentage of units for which entries of "W", "I", and "NC" are recorded shall be removed from probation when that percentage drops below fifty percent (50%).

Rationale:

The study group recommends the continuation of the present Title 5 regulations with these changes in order to:

1. Warn students when their grade point average indicates serious educational difficulties.

2. Enable colleges to identify and offer assistance to student in academic diffculty so that they become aware of the reasons for their lack of success and may take steps to remedy their educational weaknesses.

The addition of the requirement that students be placed on probation when their units of uncompleted course work exceeds fifty percent, is designed to make students aware that lack of progress in numbers of units completed is a sign of educational weakness, and it is also part of the effort to bring students to understand the importance of their own commitment to the educational process.

The new recommendations also establish specific provisions for the removal of a student from the condition of probation. Few districts were publishing such regulations.

H. DISMISSAL

Recommendation:

The study group recommends that Title 5, Section 51304 be reworded as follows:

51304. Standards for Dismissal. A student who has been placed on academic probation shall be dismissed if the student has a cumulative grade point average of less than 1.75 after attendance in at least 3 consecutive semesters (5 consecutive quarters) which were graded on the basis of the grading scale described in Section 51306.

Semesters or quarters shall be considered consecutive on the basis of the student's enrollment (i.e., a fall followed by spring quarter in which a student was enrolled shall be considered consecutive if the student was not enrolled in the winter quarter of that academic year).

A student who has been placed on progress probation shall be subject to dismissal if the percentage of units in which the student has enrolled and for which entries of "W", "I", and "NC" are recorded for at least 3 consecutive semesters (5 consecutive quarters) reaches or exceeds fifty percent (50%).

The local governing board shall establish provisions for appeal of dismissal and for reinstatement.

The local governing board shall adopt rules setting forth the circumstances that shall warrant exceptions to the standards for dismissal herein set forth and shall file a copy of such rules with the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges.

Rationale:

The primary purposes in providing for a dismissal policy are: 1) to insure that no student's academic deficiency becomes too difficult to remediate, 2) to give the student the opportunity to reflect before applying for reinstatement, 3) to emphasize the public's and the College's insistence that the students make satisfactory use of the educational services provided.

I. NOTIFICATION OF PROBATION & DISMISSAL

The study group also recommends that Title 5, Section 51307 be revised as follows:

51307. Notification of Probation and Dismissal. Each community college shall make every reasonable effort to notify a student of probation or dismissal at or near the beginning of the semester or quarter in which it will take effect but, in any

case, no later than the start of the fall semester or quarter. Each community college shall also make every reasonable effort to provide counseling and other support services to a student on probation to help the student overcome any academic difficulties. Each community college shall make every reasonable effort to notify a student of removal from probation or reinstatement after dismissal within timelines established by the district. Probation and dismissal policies and procedures shall be published in the college catalog.

Finally, the study group recommends that a student placed on probation should be required to see a counselor.

J. AUDITING

Recommendation:

The study group recommends that Title 5 remain silent on the question of auditing.

An auditor shall be defined as a "registered student attending a course without working for or expecting to receive formal credit."

Rationale:

Although the committee recognizes that there is a category of non-traditional students interested in attending college credit courses without a corresponding interest in receiving credit for the course, or in participating in classroom activities, and/or completing other course requirements, after considerable discussion it concluded that formalizing this activity in Title 5 regulations is not in the best interests of the community colleges' programs nor in the best interests of regularly enrolled students for the following reasons:

1. Combining in one classroom, students committed formally to subject matter objectives, classroom activities, and expectations of achievement, with students not so committed would distort the educational program and atmosphere of the class and multiply instructional problems. This would be particularly true if auditing were encouraged and significant numbers of students enrolled under auditing provisions.

2. Since, under the current provision of the Education Code and Title 5 regulations, colleges could not receive state funding for auditors, formalizing auditing in all probability would introduce a fee structure for credit classes. The study group felt that this could lead to the undermining of the concept of the tuition-free, open-door community colleges and is thus not in the best interests of the majority of the communities they serve.

3. Finally, it seemed apparent to the study group that various non-credit community services programs if properly adapted to the needs of individual communities should be able to provide the educational services desired by most potential auditors. For others, insistent on attending graded courses, the CR/NC option which permits a more relaxed attention to course work should fulfill the need in a manner which would not distort the classroom structure.

APPENDIX D

GRADING POLICIES STUDY GROUP
Revised Recommendation on Compliance

I Existing Title 5 Regulations

Section 71025 of the Education Code specifically grants the Board of Governors the authority to fix minimum standards and to enforce compliance thereto by withholding funds from non-complying districts. Although other sections contain similar authorities, Section 71025 appears to be the central reference for compliance.

The accommodation in Title 5 to the Education Code Section 71025 and others, regarding grading policies is diffuse, confusing, or non-existent and undoubtedly the cause of much of what passes currently for noncompliance by community college administrators and faculty. Both of these groups have, therefore, acted locally to either interpret state standards or to establish their own; sometimes counter to existing regulations. Naturally this confusion has resulted in a lack of statewide consistency in grading policies and their effect on students.

II The Study Group's Recommendations: two parts--first, those referring to compliance regulations and, second, those designed to minimize non-compliance.

A. Compliance Regulations

1. The Study Group views the subject of compliance as one of such general importance as to require separate and specific consideration by another group.

2. In addition to consideration of general compliance regulations, the charge of this committee should include procedures regarding compliance with grading policy standards.

3. Compliance regulations should be located in one place in the Education Code or Title 5 as the case may be. And those parts dealing with grading policies should include defined terminology, should be clear and specific, and should be amenable to objective evaluation.

4. Grading policy compliance procedures must be clear in statement and intent so as not to impinge on the practice of grading as exercised by individual faculty members.

B. Other Recommendations (designed to minimize non-compliance)

1. Grading policies should be published in each college catalog.

2. Each full and part-time faculty member and administrator should be provided with excerpted Title 5 regulations covering grading policies and related compliance procedures.

III Rationale

A central concern in the formation of the Grading Policies Study Group was the inequities to students in diverse statewide district grading policies and the equally diverse application thereof. Furthermore, the Study Group adopted the position, noted earlier in this report, that where a choice must be made between local autonomy and equity for students, the latter principle would prevail. Therefore, to help restore consistency in statewide grading policies, related compliance procedures should be established within the framework of the larger area of compliance regulations between the state and local districts.

Finally, in discussion of grading policies, it is difficult to ignore or avoid the practice of grading. To encourage fairness and evenhanded grading of students throughout the state of California without blundering into the thicket of faculty classroom grading practices, the recommendation is made to inform and remind faculty and student alike of the existence of statewide grading policies. Information and facts are joint corollaries to the exercise of professional judgement.

APPENDIX E

MINORITY REPORT--REGARDING THE WITHDRAWAL ("W") POLICY OF THE CHANCELLOR'S GRADING POLICIES STUDY GROUP

I. Minority Recommendation

We recommend that the Board of Governors approve the original "W" policy proposed by the Study Group or one which does not allow the "W" to be used as a substitute for an evaluative grade.

II. Problem

The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges, in response to clear evidence of a lack of equal opportunity for students due to widespread differences in grading policies among all 105 colleges, established the Grading Policies Study Group in early 1979.

From the beginning, the Study Group recognized that the existence of dissimilar withdrawal policies was a major contributor to the inequities in grading. The use of the "W" affected letter grades, probation and dismissal, incompletes, and funding. Of additional concern to the committee was that students were using the "W" symbol to avoid receiving unsatisfactory grades: "F," "D," and even "C" or "B." Also, the variations in applying the "W" symbol by colleges were creating more subtle inequities for students transferring to other institutions, as well as for those using transcripts for job-related purposes where the "W" might be interpreted as an "F." Furthermore, many instructors, faced with vague Title 5 regulations and under pressure from students, awarded "W's" after final exams, thus exacerbating the problem. The committee could not define a symbol which would be an end-of-term notation indicating failure but which would not lower a student's grade point average. Ultimately, defining such a grade was not possible without compromising the evaluative grading system, the currency of our profession.

III. Original Study Group Recommendation

By June a recommended "W" policy was developed. The "W" was to be an administrative symbol only. It would signify simply withdrawal from class. The "W" could be awarded up to the twelfth week of the term, or for the first 60% of a course. Students with valid reasons could still request a "W" through the end of the term by means of an administrative petition. This policy was based on the assumption that students should make a commitment to completing a course of study and, also, would avoid having the "W" conflict with evaluative grades given at the end of the course. This proposal would have no negative effect on funding based on the two census periods as currently scheduled.

IV. Changed Study Group Recommendation

At the November 20 meeting, the Study Group, voting 6 to 3, completely

reversed its original position in order to permit students to withdraw from class up to and including the last day of formal instruction (the day before final exams), and that the instructor could award the "W," if the local board so decides.

V. Rationale for Minority Report and Recommendation

It is ironic to note that no organized group presented the Committee with an argument for such a policy, a policy more loosely drawn than now exists in Title 5. One can only guess at the testimony in the public hearings if the original recommendation had been to permit students to withdraw through the last day of instruction.

The rationale for this minority report centers upon student commitment to education and the implicit inequities in the latest Study Group "W" proposal. Learning theory and practical experience are replete with the importance and validity of student commitment to learning and achievement, no matter how old the student. Clearly, a policy that encourages a commitment to complete a course of study is more likely to produce student perseverance and achievement than one requiring no such agreement. Certainly a personal obligation to finish is more dependable than no such pledge; and 12 weeks or 60% of a course is sufficient time for any student to make that judgment.

As for our continued concern over grading inequities, the reasoning is as follows. The current use of the "W" has created unequal opportunities for students throughout California due to misuse and misunderstanding of Title 5 regulations. The Study Group proposal to permit unrestricted withdrawals by students through the last day of instruction preserves that inequity. It does so by encouraging the use of the "W" as an evaluative grade. From the instructor's viewpoint, how fair would it be for one student to try to pass a course by taking the final exam only to fail, while 24 hours before, another student simply bailed out? Moreover, many instructors would encourage students to try their best but then face the need to penalize them for trying but not others who simply quit the day before. The outcome, of course, would be that instructors, sensing the implicit inequity, would award "W's" instead of "F's" or "D's," etc., thus subverting the policy. This problem would be far less likely to occur if students were unable to withdraw (except for cause) so late in the term as is now being recommended by the Study Group.

We still believe that instructors must teach and evaluate student accomplishments; that students assume a responsibility to themselves, the instructors, the institution, and ultimately to taxpayers when enrolling in a course; and that this responsibility includes timely notification of a decision to withdraw.

VI. Therefore, we, the undersigned members of the Grading Policies Study Group, wish publicly to repudiate the withdrawal policy recommendation adopted by the Study Group at its November 20, 1979, meeting.

signed Susan Petit
Susan Petit

signed Douglas Sabiston
Douglas Sabiston

signed Robert L. Sysum
Robert L. Sysum

APPENDIX F

ALTERNATIVE WITHDRAWAL POLICIES

Included in this Appendix "F" for added clarification are the various withdrawal recommendations and the accompanying Title 5 language. The Board Education Policy Committee considered the first four options on February 8.

(1) Authorized Withdrawal Through the Twelfth Week.

During the course of its deliberations, the Study Group at one point considered recommending a policy permitting withdrawal from a course with a "W" symbol (and no penalty) through the twelfth week (66%) of the term. Students with valid reasons could still request a "W" through the end of the term by means of administrative petition. This policy was based on the assumption that students should make a commitment to completing the course of study. Such a policy would avoid having the "W" conflict with evaluative grades given at the end of the course. This proposal would have had no negative effect on funding based on two census periods, but it would require colleges to consider attendance reporting requirements separately.

Regulations in accordance with this recommendation would be worded as follows:

"Section 51306 is amended to include:

W Withdrawal

Withdrawal from a class or classes shall be authorized during the first 12 weeks or 66% of the term, whichever is less.

No notation (W or other) shall be made on the academic record of the student who withdraws during the first 4 weeks or 30% of a term, whichever is less.

Withdrawal between the fourth and eleventh weeks (or between the 30% and 66% points) of the term shall be recorded as a "W" on the student's record.

During the final 34% of the term, or after the twelfth week, withdrawal shall be authorized only by administrative petition and then only for serious and compelling reasons clearly beyond the student's control. All requests for withdrawal shall be in writing and shall require the approval of the instructor and the appropriate college administrator.

The "W" shall not be used in calculating grade point averages, but excessive "W's" (as defined in Sections 51303 and 51304 of this part) shall be used as factors in probation and dismissal procedures.

Within these guidelines, criteria for withdrawal and the procedures to accomplish it shall be established by local boards and published in college catalogs."

(2) Authorized Withdrawal Through the Last Day of Classes.

The policy described above engendered a considerable reaction during public hearings. Speakers contended that the beneficial effect of a specific "cut-off time" for the "W" as an incentive to student commitment was an assumption that had never been experimentally validated and could not be demonstrated. Study Group members all recognized the need to provide for the privilege of withdrawal at some point in the term to preserve the essential guidance function of community colleges. While the importance of encouraging student commitment was recognized, the Group could not agree on the educational effectiveness of any specific "cut-off date." The majority finally agreed to recommend the extension of the non-punitive "W" time period up to and including the last day of instruction prior to scheduled final examinations.

Regulations in accord with this recommendation would be worded as follows:

"Section 51306 is amended to include:

W Withdrawal

Withdrawal from a class or classes shall be authorized through the last day of formal instruction prior to the first day of the final examination schedule. The academic record of a student who does not withdraw from a class beyond that time must reflect a symbol as authorized in Section 51306 of this Title, other than a "W".

No notation (W or other) shall be made on the academic record of the student who withdraws during the first 4 weeks or 30% of a term, whichever is less.

Withdrawal between the fourth week and the final day of instruction shall be recorded as a "W" on the student's record.

The "W" shall not be used in calculating grade point averages, but excessive "W's" (as defined in Section 51303 and 51304 of this part) shall be used as factors in probation and dismissal procedures.

Within these guidelines, criteria for withdrawal and the procedures to accomplish it shall be established by local boards and published in college catalogs.

(3) Authorized Withdrawal Through the Second Census Week

The fact that learning theory and practical experience support the importance and validity of student commitment to course objectives is indisputable. Furthermore, practical experience supports the view that early student commitment enhances student accomplishment of course objectives. Therefore, a systemwide "cut-off date" after which withdrawal from a course is permitted only upon the demonstrated existence of serious and compelling circumstances is in the best interest of the students, the staff and supporting public. In addition, a well defined "cut-off date" relatively early in the term would avoid the use of the "W" administrative symbol in lieu of the "D" or "F" evaluative grade.

Since the current financial support system relies on the census of students attending during the 4th and 11th weeks of the term, it is convenient and equally appropriate to use the same time limits to control withdrawal from class. Aligning the "cut-off date" for withdrawal with the census week date would help to minimize administrative data processing problems at the colleges.

Regulations in accord with this regulation would be worded as follows:

"Section 51306 is amended to include:

W Withdrawal

Withdrawal from a class or classes shall be authorized through the second census week as defined in Section 54500 of this part.

No notation (W or other) shall be made on the academic record of the student who withdraws (drops) from a class through the first census week or 30% of the term, whichever is less.

Withdrawal between the first and through the end of second census week (or approximately between the 30% and 60% points) of the term shall be recorded as a "W" on the student's record.

After the second census week, withdrawal shall be authorized only by administrative petition and then only for serious and compelling reasons clearly beyond the student's control. All requests for withdrawal shall be in writing and shall require the approval of the instructor and the appropriate college administrator.

The "W" shall not be used in calculating grade point averages, but excessive "W's" (as defined by Section 51303 of this part) shall be used as a factor in probation and dismissal procedures.

Within these guidelines, criteria for withdrawal and the procedures to accomplish it shall be established by local boards and published in college catalogs.

(4) Authorized Withdrawal Allowing Maximum Local Flexibility

Withdrawal policy should allow students to participate in and benefit from class activities to the maximum extent consistent with the judgement of local authorities.

Since the needs of the colleges' clientele vary so greatly, the maximum flexibility and local control of withdrawal practice and procedures must be maintained. Therefore, the granting of withdrawal should be based on predetermined criteria established and published by the local board. Responsibility for initiating the official request for withdrawal should rest with the student. Focusing that responsibility on the student should avoid placing instructors in the compromised position described in Appendix E.

Excessive use of the withdrawal privilege may be construed as lack of commitment to the educational endeavor and should be a factor in determining probationary status of the student.

Regulations in accord with this recommendation would be worded as follows:

"Section 51306 is amended to include:

W Withdrawal

Withdrawal from a class or classes shall be authorized through the last day of formal instruction prior to the first day of the final examination schedule. The academic record of a student who remains in a class beyond that time must reflect a symbol as authorized in Section 51306 of this Title, other than a "W".

No notation (W or other) shall be made on the academic record of the student who withdraws during the first 4 weeks or 30% of a term, whichever is less.

Withdrawal between the fourth week and the final day of instruction shall be recorded as a "W" on the student's record.

The "W" shall not be used in calculating grade point averages, but excessive "W's" (as defined in Section 51303 and 51304 of this part) shall be used as factors in probation and dismissal procedures.

Within these guidelines, criteria for withdrawal and the procedures to accomplish it shall be established by local boards and published in college catalogs.

(5) Authorized Withdrawal Through the Last Day of Classes - Absolute Standard

This option would require all districts which chose to adopt a withdrawal procedure to establish the last day of formal instruction as the final withdrawal date.

"Section 51306 is amended to include:

W Withdrawal

Each district which decides to provide a withdrawal procedure shall adopt the following policy:

Withdrawal from a class or classes shall be authorized through the last day of formal instruction prior to the first day of the final examination schedule. The academic record of a student who does not withdraw from a class beyond that time must reflect a symbol as authorized in Section 51306 of this Title, other than a "W".

No notation (W or other) shall be made on the academic record of the student who withdraws during the first 4 weeks or 30% of a term, whichever is less.

Withdrawal between the fourth week and the final day of instruction shall be recorded as a "W" on the student's record.

The "W" shall not be used in calculating grade point averages, but excessive "W's" (as defined in Section 51303 and 51304 of this part) shall be used as factors in probation and dismissal procedures.

In accordance with this provision, criteria for withdrawal and the procedures to accomplish it shall be established by local boards and published in college catalogs.

(6) Authorized Withdrawal Through the Last Day of Classes - Minimum Standard

This option would permit a district to establish a final withdrawal date at some point in time earlier than the last day of formal instruction.

"Section 51306 is amended to include:

W Withdrawal

A district which decides to provide a withdrawal procedure shall adopt a policy consistent with the following:

Withdrawal from a class or classes shall be authorized through the last day of formal instruction prior to the first day of the final examination schedule. The governing board may establish a final withdrawal date which prohibits withdrawal after a designated point in time between the end of the fourth week of instruction and the last day of formal instruction. The academic record of a student who remains in a class beyond the time allowed by district policy must reflect a symbol as authorized in Section 51306 of this part, other than a "W".

No notation ("W" or other) shall be made on the academic record of the student who withdraws during the first 4 weeks or 30% of a term, whichever is less.

Withdrawal between the fourth week and the final day of instruction shall be recorded as a "W" on the student's record.

The "W" shall not be used in calculating grade point averages, but excessive "W's" (as defined in Sections 51303 and 51304 of this part) shall be used as factors in probation and dismissal procedures.

Within these guidelines, criteria for withdrawal and the procedures to accomplish it shall be established by governing boards and published in college catalogs.

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